

VZCZCXYZ0000  
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHBU #0152/01 0391752  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
R 081752Z FEB 08  
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0212  
INFO RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO 1026  
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 6698  
RUEHAC/AMEMBASSY ASUNCION 6802  
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ FEB LIMA 2236  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC  
RHMCSUU/FBI WASHINGTON DC  
RUEABND/DEA HQS WASHINGTON DC  
RHMFIUU/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHINGTON DC  
RHMFIUU/HQ USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL

UNCLAS BUENOS AIRES 000152

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KJUS](#) [SNAR](#) [PHUM](#) [ASEC](#) [KPAO](#) [MASS](#) [AR](#)

SUBJECT: ARGENTINA: MENDOZA GOVERNOR SEEKS CLOSER U.S. TIES

¶1. (U) Summary: Mendoza Governor Celso Jaque called on the Ambassador February 6, seeking increased contact and opportunities for cooperation with the Embassy and U.S. agencies on such issues as public security, counternarcotics, and public administration. Public security is a top concern for Mendocinos, and Jaque says he is committed to training and equipping provincial security agencies to meet the challenge. Ambassador assured Jaque of the Embassy's interest in supporting Jaque's efforts where possible and suggested possible opportunities for law enforcement training through LegAtt, the RSO, and DEA. Jaque said he wanted to improve public administration in Mendoza, establishing a new school of public administration, and has asked former Mendoza Governors to participate in the school and to form an Advisory Council on public policy. Ambassador said the Embassy would be glad to work with the Governor and his staff to explore ways in which the Embassy can help. End Summary.

¶2. (U) Mendoza Governor Celso Jaque and his Security Minister Carlos Aguinaga called on Ambassador February 6, to discuss increasing contact and cooperation with the Embassy in a number of areas. Jaque, a Peronist (PJ) politician, was recently elected Governor (October 2007) with the Kirchners' political support. Prior to that, he was a national Senator for Mendoza, elected in 2003.

Public Security a Priority  
-----

¶3. (U) Jaque stated that public security remains a serious concern in Mendoza. He pointed to a combination of drug abuse, social exclusion (poverty), and availability of illegal arms as the primary cause. He explained that he had created a new position, a Subsecretary for Security and appointed a retired provincial police chief, to be responsible for the daily administration of the provincial police. Jaque explained that there had been too much "political" management of the police and not enough professional management. He noted for instance that the provincial police's communication equipment was not compatible with that of federal law enforcement agencies. A contract to implement a GPS program, designed to track and coordinate mobile unit activities, was a disaster.

¶4. (U) Mendoza's vineyards and adventure tourism draw tourists from around the world, and Jaque said he wanted to make sure Mendoza remained a safe and attractive destination for this valuable trade, and that he was working with the major vineyards and local security forces on this issue. (Ambassador had pointed out a brazen robbery on a Mendoza winery hotel in which U.S. citizens were harmed.)

## Looking for Professional Training

---

15. (U) The Governor explained that he would like to reform the training for provincial security forces. New officers receive general training but no specialized training in investigative techniques and other specific areas. LegAtt described a number of possible options for providing training to provincial police and prosecutors. He explained that the FBI conducts regular management courses to which foreign law enforcement students are invited, and that his office had coordinated training for prosecutors and judges in other provinces. Ambassador said that there were also training options available through Lima ILEA, and noted that the RSO was currently identifying Argentine law enforcement officials to participate in a one-week street security course in Peru.

## Counternarcotics Cooperation

---

16. (U) In response to a question, Jaque stated that cocaine and marijuana use was not a major problem in Mendoza, nor did they see evidence of major trafficking rings, but that he was concerned about juvenile abuse of inhalants. Nevertheless, he said that he was concerned about the province's inability to monitor/inspect the significant semi-trailer traffic transiting the province to and from its international border crossings with Chile. He noted previous cooperation with the Embassy's DEA Country Office and said he would like to strengthen that cooperation. Jaque said he would welcome DEA's presence in Mendoza. Ambassador noted that the Embassy's DEA Country Office had had a staffing gap for some time but was expecting the imminent arrival of a new Special Agent, who would have specific responsibility for Mendoza. Ambassador said that he would ask DEA to make sure the new Agent established communications with Mendoza authorities as soon as possible.

17. (SBU) Note: The new Governor minimized drug trafficking activity in Mendoza, perhaps out of ignorance. Historically (dating back to at least CY-2000), in joint investigations with DEA Buenos Aires Country Office, the Mendoza Provincial police have regularly arrested significant Colombian and Argentine traffickers residing in that area. Those organizations dealt with both multi-kilogram quantities of cocaine as well as heroin, sending their narcotics to Europe and/or the U.S. With the arrival of another DEA Special Agent next week, we can re-engage with provincial authorities and take the Governor up on his offer of increased cooperation on the counternarcotics front. End Note.

## Demand Reduction, Treatment, and Detention Facilities

---

18. (U) Jaque explained that Mendoza's demand reduction programs/efforts had been under-funded and under-emphasized, something he hoped to reverse. He noted that there were no provincial drug treatment centers, only a couple of federally-run facilities that he described as "collapsed." The Governor said he wanted to open four provincial drug and alcohol rehabilitation facilities.

19. (U) In 2006 and February 2007, the Argentine Supreme Court instructed the national and Mendoza provincial governments to report concrete measures taken to improve prison conditions that would address several rulings by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights on the issue. Jaque said that one of the provincial prisons is temporarily under management by federal authorities. Jaque related that he had just met with the federal Minister of Justice and Security Anibal Fernandez and had requested that Fernandez continue the federal intervention for an additional eight months, to which he said Fernandez agreed. Jaque explained that the extension was required to ensure that reforms called for by the Supreme Court are implemented. He also said that the federal government was also going to build two new federal detention centers in Mendoza, but that the province would manage them. He said it was also a priority of his to build four new provincial jails - designed for a maximum of 50 detainees - with the focus being on social reinsertion, i.e., providing young detainees, in particular, with necessary job and life skills.

## Civil Defense Needs

---

¶10. (U) The Governor explained that Mendoza has passed a public security emergency law that allows the Governor to reallocate budget funds for expenditures related to public security, cutting some of the bureaucratic hurdles (but not decreasing transparency, he stressed). The "emergency" declaration is for one year. Governor Jaque explained that he would like to purchase -- or obtain gratis -- used civil defense items such as fire trucks and helicopters for the provincial security and civil defense forces. Ambassador said the Embassy would be glad to look into possible avenues that Mendoza could pursue. He also noted that contacts through sister city arrangements or through such organizations as the Rotary Club often can identify such used and excess equipment. (Note: Embassy's Military Group is investigating the possibility of obtaining equipment under the Humanitarian Assistance Program. End Note.)

## Focus on Public Administration

---

¶11. (U) Finally, Jaque stressed the need for, and his focus on, improved public administration. He has asked former Mendoza governors -- Rodolfo Gabrielli, Arturo Lafalla, Argentine former Ambassador to the U.S. Jose Octavio Bordon, Roberto Iglesias, and Vice President of Argentina Julio Cobos -- to participate in an Advisory Council that will advise the Governor on strategic provincial issues and public policies. He has also created a School of Public Administration and has asked the former Governors to participate in this endeavor. Jaque said they would like to bring experts from the United States to give lectures and would like to promote visits and interchanges. Ambassador replied that the Embassy was very interested in this type of cooperation and outreach and would work with the Governor's office to explore ways in which to support his efforts.

WAYNE